

THE LIRIC LETTER

Learning in Retirement at Iona College

August 2011

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WEAR YOUR BADGE

It is now mandatory that members wear their badges to classes at the Elks Lodge. Failure to wear badges may result in non-admittance unless membership is verified by Director.

A Very "Special Event"

The frail, impeccably coiffed and groomed woman was escorted to the stage of Iona's Romita Auditorium on Iona's campus. Seated between Ted Levine and Linda Whetzel, she proceeded to entertain us by her witty comments and observations. This lady, Bel Kaufman, granddaughter of writer, humorist Sholem Aleichem, entertained us and amazed us. For starters, she casually observed that "I don't know how I got to be 100. I suppose it happened gradually." What a learning experience for the "Youngsters" (us) in the audience! 100 years old? So attractive and clever? 100 years old? Believe it.

Kaufman, acclaimed author of "Up the Down Staircase" gracefully answered questions from the audience, which packed Romita to overflowing. The

book which sold more than 7 million copies and was made into a movie, is being re-issued. Ted read some passages from the newest version, creating peals of laughter which flowed through the halls and windows onto North Avenue. In answer to questions regarding her advanced age, she said that "All is good at 100. If you have health you can live forever." She stated that she never planned to write a novel and claimed that it was a total accident which started as a short story of about 2 ½ pages.

At lecture's end, one audience member commented, "I want to be just like her, when I grow up." ME TOO.



Photo Credit—Frank Mohalley

LIRIC DONATION TO IONA

Chairman of Iona's School of Arts & Science, Dr. Brian Nickerson, has chosen to use LIRIC's monetary donation to support the Research for Summer Science Students. He states that many students would have to work at low-paying part-time jobs to afford the tuition for this course, and many scholarly papers have been published by prior Summer students. It is LIRIC's pleasure to make this small effort to repay Iona for their many kindnesses to us.

AUDITING A CLASS AT IONA

I am in my 2nd year of retirement from Wall Street and found LIRIC through a conversation with a lady from Montana while on a tour of Normandy, France. Having heard my wishes to continue my education, she connected me with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; and from there I came back to Iona College, my Alma Mater nearly 50 years ago. Business is behind me, and now it is time to reinvent myself with the study of "anything but business".

You are all familiar with the multiple LIRIC courses and lectures that are offered to us throughout the year. A lot of thought & work by a number of great volunteers goes into these sessions. There really is something for everyone. I myself am in my 2nd year at the Art Workshop on Monday afternoons under the guidance of Louise Stern. I never had a brush in my hand, until now. All the art students are at different levels and nurtured by Louise. The camaraderie of the group is wonderful.

If you are looking for a more formal study program I would suggest Auditing an Iona class. Each LIRIC member is eligible for one class in both the Fall and Spring semester. You sit in an actual undergraduate class of your choosing. Some meet twice, and some meet three times a week. You participate in the lecture and discussions following the professor's reading requirements. Questions and answers by auditors are acceptable to a limit, remembering the class is being taught mainly for the fee paying students. On audit, there is no written exam to do, no paper to prepare, but also no grade to receive.

To begin the process: you go to the Iona College website (www.iona.edu/), click on Academics at the top, click on School of Arts & Science, and under Course Offerings click on Fall. The complete Fall 2011 course program is shown. It is in alphabetical order by subject, showing days of class during the week, time of the class, and the class professor. Here is where your individual taste come into play. I have a history interest and have taken courses in Latin America History, as well European History.

Latin America nation history was never taught to me in the "core" history courses of an Iona business major. Under Professor John Sullo,

C.F.C., I learned of the Latin America's Countries long colonial period, revolutions, nation formation and interplay with The United States and Europe. All most interesting and revealing.

Under Professor Michael Hughes, I took two European History Courses: 1st) Europe, 1648-1800 Age of Reason and Revolution (after the end of The Thirty Years War the formation of powerful modern states, the rise of the consumer economy, the Enlightenment, the formation of public opinion, the emergence of the concept of the nation, and new expensive military conflicts) and 2nd) The Age of Ideology-Europe in the 19th Century (revolutions and industrialization, new belief systems or ideologies, new political and military practices, new artistic and intellectual trends, new economic patterns, new relations between the sexes, new nations, with Europe at Century end, finding itself careening toward a war more devastating than any conflict in its history) .

Once you have chosen a class, I would suggest, you contact the professor and request his acceptance in your auditing his lecture. This step is not necessary, but I like it as a courtesy. If not, show up on our LIRIC designated registration date, the registrar has the final say on course acceptance and will provide you with an admittance form to be given to the professor on the first day of class. I believe the only classes that are not available for audit are: computer and fine arts. LIRIC audit registration date is usually close to the starting date of class. Suzanne Page always provides us that information by posting it on the bulletin board.

Besides the specific information you will learn from the chosen course, of course, there is the added benefit of the interaction you will have with the professor and students. Professors are made more aware of LIRIC and both of mine have lectured in the LIRIC program. I hope this interplay will assist me on my new position on the curriculum committee. I also have found out how nice the modern students are, and how hard they work both in the class and outside, in order to meet those high tuition payments.

Between the lectures and the students, I have to say there is nothing but pleasure in auditing at Iona.

Chris McCormick

STANDING ROOM ONLY

No kidding . . . the Elks' Auditorium was chock full of drama aficionados eager to hear Arthur Feinberg's take on the playwrights of the 1940's and 50's and their plays.

Eugene O'Neil, Tennessee Williams, William Inge and Arthur Miller were among the dramatists that Arthur discussed. As Arthur outlined the lives and works of these playwrights, one common theme recurred time after time - that theme making it seem that one had to have come from a dysfunctional family to be a successful playwright.

It almost seemed necessary to have an alcoholic or substance-abusing parent to enable these tortured souls to write their masterpieces.

Some of their prized plays were made into movies and we were able to view excerpts from some of them.

This class was a delight, highlighting the talents and interests that Arthur shares with us. With interests ranging from "The Boys of Summer" to the finest of Broadway's playwrights during the golden -nay- platinum era of drama, Arthur's knowledge is hard to beat.

NEW IONA PRESIDENT MEETS AND GREETES



The Iona community, which includes LIRIC, had the opportunity to meet and chat with Dr. Joseph Nyre at a reception at McSpedon Hall. Vice President Barbara Mohalley and Treasurer Frank Mohalley were among the many who shook his hand at the catered event. President Nyre said "I look forward to working with LIRIC".

SAVE THE DATES

Sunday, September 11th
Open House

Monday, October 3rd
Fall classes start

Thursday, December 1st
General Membership Meeting

Saturday, December 3rd
Fall Classes end

Wednesday, December 14th
Winter Luncheon at the
Davenport Club, New Rochelle

Thursday, January 5, 2012
Winter Classes start

Thursday, January 26th
Winter Classes end

THE NEW YORK CITY OPERA

When the Newsletter Editor asked me if I were going on the trip to the New York City Opera on March 23rd, and, if so, would I be willing to write about the trip, I didn't hesitate to say yes, since I am an "opera lover". The day was to include a dress rehearsal performance of three short operas, a box lunch at the Julliard Cafe, a backstage tour which was to include the history, the artwork, and anecdotes.

Unfortunately the weatherman didn't cooperate. It drizzled most of the day but this didn't hinder our enjoyment. When we arrived in New York we immediately went to the Julliard Cafe for our box lunch.

After lunch we went directly to the theater where we were met by our guide, Kate. The David H. Koch Theater is home to the New York City Opera and the New York City Ballet, and was designed by Philip Johnson and opened on April 23rd, 1964. It was originally constructed strictly for the New York City Ballet Company.

The ceiling of the 200 foot-long Promenade is made of 24-carat gold. There are many sculptures throughout the theater. At both ends of the Promenade are Elie Nadelman's giant twin sculptures, each carved from a single block of Carrara marble. Philip Johnson personally commissioned the white marble enlargements of "Two Circus Women" and "Two Female

Nudes" from smaller bronzes just five feet high. Kate told us that the building couldn't be completed until these sculptures were moved into the building.

Located just east of the entrance is Jasper Johns 1964 "Numbers", a painting that employs commonplace man-made objects. In this case, stenciled numbers covered with liquid sculptmetal. In a salute to the performing arts, the artist included Merce Cunningham's footprint at the upper right "so that Merce would have his foot in the door of the new theater".

Next on the agenda was the backstage tour. When we entered the theater, there appeared to be people already on the stage, but it turned out to be department store mannequins dressed in burkas for the first opera "La Machine de L'Etra". The stage manager explained to us exactly what his job entailed. The most stressful part of his job was when there was a matinee and then an evening performance. When the matinee ran more than three hours, he had to clear the stage of scenery, etc., which left him only a few hours to place the new scenery on stage for the evening performance.

The dress rehearsal performance was the premiere of "Monodramas", a triple bill of 20th century one-act works that are not operas in any traditional sense. The dictionary defines opera as a drama wholly or

mostly sung, consisting of recitative, arias, choruses, duets, etc. with orchestral accompaniments and appropriate costumes, scenery and action.

The first opera "La Machine de L'Etra" was by John Zorn who described the piece as a Monodrama because it is scored for only one singer. There is no text, no plot, and no stage direction predetermined whatsoever. The opera was inspired by a drawing by Antonin Artaud which was created during his last day in the asylum at Rodez. As coloratura soprano, Anu Komsi sang, an animation of the drawing danced in a cartoon thought-bubble over her head, one of which erupts in flames at the end.

The second opera was Arnold Schoenberg's 1909 psychodrama "Ertwartung" which means "waiting". It began with the recorded sounds of crickets, birds and brooks. A woman is walking through a forest searching for her lover whom she believes she has murdered. When the orchestral music starts, the forest is quickly established as a mysterious and dangerous place. All through the piece, the body of a man in a gray suit with a knife in his chest is sprawled on stage. When she discovers her lover's body, the man rises. The question arises - did she kill him or did any of this happen? The singing was performed by soprano Kara Shay

...The New York City Opera continued from page 4

Thompson who was marvelous.

Last on the program was Morton Feldman's 1977 "Neither", set to a libretto by Samuel Beckett. The second line reads "from impenetrable self to impenetrable unself by way of neither". The opera features a mixed ensemble of silent characters in male evening dress (one member is occasionally lifted into the air on a wire), a shiny moire'-textured background, small mirrored cubes suspended from above that rise and fall, and elaborate color-drenched lighting effects.

To quote a description "this haunting, glacial composition

challenges the highest extremes of the soprano range". The soprano Cyndi Seiden was amazing.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this piece, I am an "opera lover", however, these avant-garde Monodramas weren't exactly my "cup of tea", although I must confess it was a learning experience for me.

The trip today provided us with a wealth of information concerning the New York City Opera for which we are grateful to our guide, Kate.

Everything in life is an experience. We have Florence

Wagner to thank for our unique experience for a great day.

P.S. An announcement has been made that the New York City Opera is leaving Lincoln Center due to economic problems. They have a five million dollar deficit. They are moving their operation but have not indicated as to where they are going. They will be performing fewer operas and reducing their administration staff. I now realize how fortunate we at LIRIC were, to have gone on this trip.

Barbara Nissim

IF YOU LOVE THEATER

If you love theater, but are concerned about the high cost of theater tickets, you should become familiar with the "Iona College Theatre Ensemble", an integral part of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts. As a member of LIRIC, for only \$5.00, you can attend and support the theater students under the able guidance of Theatre Program Director, Professor Thomas Donnarumma.

Every spring and autumn, the talented Iona College Theatre Ensemble presents an exciting theater experience. For the 2010-2011 season we were privileged to see "Reasons to be Pretty" by Neil La Bute, and the most recent performance of "Miss Julie", by August Strindberg. Other previous productions by prestigious playwrights have been "A View from the Bridge" by Arthur Miller, "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen and Moliere's "Tartuffe".

Be sure to check your LIRIC Course Catalog in the coming Fall and Spring semesters to check the theater events and dates. Don't forget to mark your calendar so you don't miss this very worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

Gladys Ross



MAHJONG SET NEEDED

If anyone has a Mahjong set they would like to donate, please contact Linda Whetzel at: 1-718-324-1120. LIRIC is adding a Mahjong class in the Fall and needs one more set.

PEARL BUCK

Our trip to the Pearl S. Buck House in Perkasi, Pennsylvania was the perfect introduction to our Spring course "Pearl Buck's China" given by Professor Linda Ching Sledge. We had already learned how Pearl, the child of missionaries in China, spent her childhood there. She and her family periodically traveled to the United States to visit family and for further education. Pearl's writing career began in China and, at age 25, she married and had her first child there. In 1934, she returned to the United States and purchased Green Hills Farm, consisting of the original fieldstone house, barn, and surrounding land. Later, she expanded the house, which became known as the Pearl S. Buck House, by adding a two story fieldstone wing and two libraries.

We started our tour in the Welcome Center, where we watched a video and heard about Pearl Buck's life. We saw the Awards Room, which contained her Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes and hundreds of awards, honors, and photographs recognizing her humanitarian efforts. We also saw many hoods she received when given honorary degrees from different universities. Before we left we saw the newly created Pearl S. Buck Historical Time Line.

We left the Welcome Center in the rain so we were not able to see many of the outdoor sights. We did cross over the Preservation Walkway, which was made up of over three hundred bricks, each inscribed with a donor's name. We were also able to see two outdoor statues: "Mother and Child" by Madeline Smith and "Uplift" by Dr. Selma Burke. Both statues paid tribute

to Pearl's founding of Welcome House, an adoption agency for Amerasian and multi-racial children in Asia. In 1935, Pearl divorced her first husband and married her publisher, Richard Walsh. Together they adopted six biracial children and Pearl spent the remainder of her life publicizing and fighting prejudice and injustices against such children. The Walsh home was a vital part of the surrounding community and the center of many activities such as dances and holiday parties, swimming, ball playing and watching movies. It still maintains strong ties with the local community and beyond through many educational and social activities.

We next made our way to the main building. The furnishings and contents of the house blend the Eastern and Western influences of Miss Buck's life. Nineteenth century Pennsylvanian architecture and Early American furniture are mixed with Asian art, textiles and themes. This eclectic mix reflects Pearl's life as a wife and mother, world renowned author and humanitarian.

One of the first rooms we saw was Pearl's office where she wrote most of her over eighty books. The window sill held sculptures Pearl made of her children. Above the office was the loft where these sculptures were made. The room also contained two Chinese Zitan chairs and bookshelves. Richard's office also had two Chinese Zitan chairs and a kitchen table used as a desk. The room contained an iron teapot Richard had from his college days. Both libraries contained Chinese rugs smug-

gled out of China during the revolutions. There were also paperweights of Murano glass, geodes, and collected rocks.

The boys' bedroom had been dismantled several years before in order to house the original Awards Room. With the construction of the new Awards Room in the Welcome Center, the boys' rooms have been restored with typical furniture and toys from the period. A small closet located outside the room was used for warming bottles and changing diapers.

The main chestnut paneled library contained the original hand carved desk and the typewriter on which Pearl wrote "The Good Earth" while in China. The many books included foreign language translations of Pearl's books and a phonograph and record albums. Chinese rugs were on the floor and ginger jar Chinese lamps on the desk.

The parents' rooms were separated by closets and there was a fireplace in each. Pearl's room had a snow landscape painted by her mother when she was pregnant with Pearl.

Continued on page 7



...Pearl Buck Continued from page 8

Further highlights of the beautiful art and artifacts found throughout the house include:

- ◆ American oil paintings by Redfield, Chambers and Baum
- ◆ Lithographs by Currier and Ives
- ◆ A Tibetan wall hanging given by the Dali Lama
- ◆ 2 fold red lacquer screen decorated with ivory, bone, and mother of pearl
- ◆ Clothing such as a dragon robe and lotus slippers for bound feet
- ◆ Portraits of Miss Buck including one by Questguard when she was younger and one by Elliot at age 72
- ◆ Steinway piano and organ
- ◆ ·Pennsylvania Dutch art and furniture
- ◆ Ladder back chairs from the Delaware River Valley
- ◆ ·An Indian wedding lamp

One can't help but be impressed by the beauty Pearl S. Buck surrounded herself by, but most impressive of all is the insight it gives us into her life and many accomplishments.

Teddi Cerino

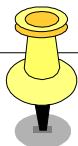
JAMES A. MICHENER MUSEUM ALI and ELVIS: American Icons and Other Points of Interest

Originally a prison built in 1884, the Michener Museum in Doylestown, PA opened in 1988. Only the stone walls were left intact. The area is called the "Genius Belt" because many artists, writers and sculptors lived there. A friend of Michener asked to name it the Michener Museum, since it was endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Michener.

Ms. Lutz Fischer, our guide, gave us an extensive biographical account of James Michener, which turned out to be quite colorful. We then proceeded to the gallery where on display were paintings by early 20th century American Impressionists who lived and worked in Bucks County. Among these was Edward Redfield who concentrated on light in his paintings. In winter especially, he completed his work in one day, since there were only 4-6 hrs. of light. And he wanted to capture a particular moment of light on his large scale landscapes. When he thought his eyesight was going, he burned his paintings. Other notable artists were Daniel Garber, Paul Keene Jr., Ben Solway, and Arlene Love, whose works explored the human figure as their primary source of inspiration.

Led into a lovely sample room, we saw the work of George Nakashima (1905-1990), a master woodworker. He was second generation Japanese and was impressed with the simplicity of Japanese use of materials. He believed the wood should dictate the shape and form of the piece. Of interest were the two legged proportioned chairs and Andy Warhol's dining room table built as a bench. The additions made to the room were glass panels, but no steel was used. A "Mother Post" held up the house, which is used for social functions.

In keeping with our theme of the 60's, we were treated to two separate traveling exhibits of the American Icons; Elvis Presley and Muhammad Ali. Our guide, Mary Ellen Cronin, took us through a gallery containing fabulous candid photos of Elvis. These were taken the year he turned 21 by Al Wertheimer, a young freelance photographer. Ironically, Wertheimer was not a fan and had never heard of Elvis. But his photographs are a remarkable documentation of Elvis's life from making his first record in 1956, moving from SUN RECORDS to RCA, making his first television appearance and starting his movie career. The photographs are a wonderful visual record of a defining time for rock 'n roll's most enduring figure. What stood out in some of the photos



MEMBER NEWS

You'll be happy to know that **Charlotte McGovern**, **Sue O'Rourke**, **Leslie Sweedler**, **Barbara Rappaport**, **Leona Poss**, and **Gene Schwartz** all are recovering well from varied ailments. **Eileen Potash** is recovering from a fall.

Our condolences to **Grace Mouille** on the loss of her mother, and to the family of **Gloria Argenta** who recently passed away.

Former member **Ann Glasheen** wants her LIRIC friends to know that she is settled in her new home and would love to hear from them. Her new address is 57 Granderville Court - Room 3332, Wakefield, RI 02879

LIRIC is pleased to introduce a new Computer Instructor this Fall, **Terri Ransom**. Terri will introduce LIRIC to a new course this Fall, "Introduction to the Internet", Saturday mornings from 10 to 12.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we inform you that member Gladys Ross has passed away after a very brief illness. Gladys was well-known for her friendly and pleasant manner and her general willingness to help when needed. Although Gladys and husband Dick divided their time between White Plains, Florida and Chautauqua, New York, she cherished the time spent at LIRIC and the learning gleaned from its classes, as well as the camaraderie with fellow students.

She favored the book discussions and the lively debates that followed. It was not unusual to observe Gladys on a LIRIC trip, pen in hand, making notes for an article for this Newsletter. She even reported on a personal trip to Israel that Dick and she enjoyed. Ironically, Gladys' last reporting job for the Newsletter is included in this issue.

LIRIC has lost a good friend, her husband a good wife, and her children and grandchildren a loving mother and grandmother. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to all of them.



YOUR BUDDY IS SICK

If one of your LIRIC friends is ill or has suffered the loss of a dear one, please call Barbara Mohalley at (914) 576-2311 with the information. We want to send a card wishing our fellow member well or extending our sympathy. Remember: LIRIC members are caring and supportive of one another, but we have to be aware of the info.

AU REVOIR, MIGLIOS

LIRIC members did a lot of head-craning during classes this summer. They were looking for amiable Gene Miglio to come a’running with a microphone as class discussions took place. Alas, Gene and his capable, creative wife, Fran, have moved to Philadelphia to be closer to relatives.

Fran was an important part of the Curriculum Committee, as she sought lecturers to enhance that year’s curriculum. She was tenacious in convincing lecturers that lecturing to LIRIC’s members was a fantastic experience that they would enjoy doing.

The Miglios will be sorely missed, both behind the scenes (Fran) and right up front (Gene).

Philadelphia is a lucky city to claim them.



Photo Credit—Frank Mohalley

WEDDING BELLS - Our First



With the utmost pleasure, we inform you that Writing Workshop teacher Irene Schindler and Dr. Raymond Peckauskas, our resident philosopher/teacher, tied the knot on July 30th.

Irene and Ray have summered and taught at the Chautauqua Institution for some years and chose to be married on those beautiful grounds.

LIRIC members extend their heart-felt good wishes to both of these special people.

...James A. Michener Museum Continued from page 7

was the ever present signs of segregation as seen by the separate bathrooms for "Whites" and "Coloreds". I loved the photo of Elvis on a Harley and our guide told us he had great respect for Jimmy Dean and Marlon Brando. Wertheimer is to be congratulated, for he kept all the negatives. What a gift for posterity. Elvis was certainly the heart throb of all us young women of that era.

In contrast, Muhammad Ali's photographs were taken by different photographers, among them Steve Schapiro, Gordon Parks, William Coupon, Art Shay and Annie Liebovitz. Some photos were taken with family whom he was close to. And a bit of trivia, he bought his mother a Cadillac with the first money he won from boxing. We followed his career through more than 50 photos, showing the matches in which he vanquished Liston, Frazier and Cleveland Williams. He was also pictured on the cover of Sports Illustrated. On Nov. 9, 2002, Ali was presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom by G. W. Bush. This exhibit certainly provided a glimpse of rarely seen moments of his personal life as well as more famous episodes from his career. Ali was the most beloved and most hated man in boxing.

The final gallery we saw was named "Add Sugar and Stir". The artist, Kirby Fredendall, felt a cookbook was more than a collection of recipes. It was a form of literature written by and for women that depicts their everyday lives throughout the centuries. Fredendall's cookbook art featured images and collages which were composed of oil and beeswax on vintage paper, cookbooks, booklets and magazines, burying words and photographs with the layers. There was also a cute display of heads showing various chic hairstyles. Who knows, maybe we can re-imagine our own era from the insights we get from our own cookbooks.

Lorraine Rosano



**SCENES
FROM OUR
SPRING
LUNCHEON**



LAUGH LINES



SNOW DAYS



In the event of bad weather, LIRIC closings will be announced in the following places:

Watch: Channel 12 and look for LIRIC

Listen to: WCBS 880 AM—listen for LIRIC

Log on to WCBS 880's website:

<http://www.wcbssnow.com/closings> and look for LIRIC.

Makeup classes may be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor/coordinator.

LIRIC
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